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C O N F I D E N T I A L WARSAW 003825

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/09/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [PL](#)

SUBJECT: POLISH MILITARY PREPARES TO REMAIN IN IRAQ, BUT  
AWAITS POLITICAL DECISION

REF: WARSAW 3794

Classified By: Polcouns Mary T. Curtin for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

1. (C) SUMMARY. During the November 8-9 Force Generation Conference in Warsaw for the sixth rotation of the Multinational Division Center-South (MND-CS) in Iraq, the Chief of Strategic Planning for the Polish General Staff outlined plans for a continued, albeit reduced Polish presence in Iraq. However, newly named DefMin Sikorski cautioned that all Polish offers made during the conference were "provisional" pending a political decision from the new government. Bulgaria, Lithuania, Mongolia and Romania also signaled draw downs. Throughout the conference, the Poles underscored their eagerness to change the mission from stabilization and training to advisory and training. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) During the conference, Chief of Strategic Planning Colonel Leszek Soczewica reported that Poland had made provision for sending 1,000 troops to Iraq for the sixth rotation, a decrease from the current level of 1,454 troops. Soczewica noted that Polish troop strength would ultimately depend on allied troop contributions, as Poland might be able to add troops to compensate for reductions by other nations. In a November 8 meeting with Ambassador Ashe, DefMin Sikorski cautioned that all Polish offers made during the conference were "provisional," as the new government had not yet at that time been confirmed and so could not take any political decisions on future Polish deployments in Iraq.

3. (C) Ukraine reminded attendees that its government had already decided to withdraw almost completely by December 31, 2005. Bulgaria and Mongolia warned that they still needed government approval to participate in the sixth rotation. Romania and Lithuania also forecast reductions in their contingents. A summary of current and projected troop totals for the 13 nations participating in the MND-CS follows.

Nation	Now	Plan for 2006
Armenia	45	46
Bulgaria	378	0 (GOB decision pending)
Denmark	5	5
El Salvador	380	380
Kazakhstan	28	28
Latvia	135	135
Lithuania	54	10
Mongolia	130	0 (GOM decision pending)
Poland	1454	1000
Romania	218	150
Slovakia	103	103
Ukraine	889	13
USA	17	17

4. (C) Soczewica reiterated Poland's oft-expressed intent to transition as soon as possible from a stabilization mission to a training and advisory mission. From the outset, the conference focused heavily on generating commitments to Military Transition Teams (33 person groups) at the division, brigade and battalion level to facilitate this transition. In Soczewica's opinion this new mission would reduce the allied profile in Iraq by transferring more security responsibilities to the Iraqis themselves.

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Allies Lowballing  
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5. (C) COMMENT: The General Staff (and former DefMin Szmajdzinski) had previously told us that the current Polish defense budget for 2006 could support as many as 1,000 troops in Iraq. Soczewica softened the blow of publicly stating the reduced troop figure by mentioning Poland's readiness to backfill for the draw downs of other allies. If Poland were to maintain its current troop level of 1,454, that would nearly cover the projected loss of Bulgarians, Lithuanians and Romanians. Unfortunately, there are not enough Polish or other MND-CS TCN troops available at present to make up for the withdrawal of over 800 Ukrainians.

6. (C) COMMENT CONTINUED: Now that the government has won the November 10 vote of confidence, it will need to make a political decision about remaining in Iraq. As reported in

reftel, DefMin Sikorski sees his November 30 visit to  
Washington playing into that decision. END COMMENT.  
HILLAS